

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:**

Please add the following at page 1, before line 1 and after the title:

**BACKGROUND**

1. Technical Field

Please add the following at page 1, between lines 5 and 6:

2. Related Art

Please add the following at page 1, between lines 24 and 25:

**SUMMARY**

Please replace the paragraph at page 2, beginning at line 9:

The exemplary embodiment of this invention provides a communications system which maximizes the benefits to be obtained by the use of "cut-throughs" for packet traffic on a circuit-switched network, even when the ultimate destination of the packets does not itself lie on the circuit-switched network. This is achieved by sending polling messages, such as Ping messages as defined for packet networks using Internet Protocol, from gateways on the circuit-switched network into the packet-switched network. The optimum destination point on the circuit-switched network for the cut-through can then be selected dynamically to give the best path to the destination packet address.

Please replace the paragraph at page 2 beginning at line 21:

A further important advantage of the present invention exemplary embodiment is that it enables circuits to be established across different networks. By contrast, in an MPOA architecture, an SVC cut-through is limited to the extent of the MPOA network.

Please add the following at page 3, between lines 2 and 3:

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

Please add the following at page 3, between lines 19 and 20:

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EXEMPLARY EMBODIMENTS**

Please amend the heading at page 8:

~~CLAIMS~~ WHAT IS CLAIMED IS: